**Starting on Time** – Even though game time is established in advance, things may delay the actual start of the game. Coaches must work with their opponents and the referee to communicate the actual kick off time. This can be a matter of safety for the players and is subject to penalty if excessive (referee’s judgment). All you have to do is communicate that the actual kick off is (say) 7:05 at the start of warm ups and put the actual start time on the clock. Let’s be considerate and support a safe warm up period.

**Helmet Off Rule** – Reminder, the helmet off rule pertains to a player’s helmet coming off during a play. A player who takes his helmet off after the play is not subject to the rule and the mandatory one-play sit out. There is no foul for a player taking his helmet off on the field. That is a college rule. BUT, if a player takes off his helmet as a part of an excessive celebration that is meant to draw attention to himself, then we have a foul.

**Complement Players: Don’t Threaten!** – Sometimes in trying to be helpful, we tell a player that he was close to an ejectionable action.  This doesn’t really work as the player (and subsequently the coach) feel you’re threatening the player.  “Good job of not leading with your helmet” is much, much better than “your close to being ejected for leading with your helmet.”

**Instructional Video** – Each week we use Hudl to create a playlist from the past week’s games.  Sometimes these plays are sent in by coaches but mostly I just randomly pick a game and watch for good officiating and plays where we can improve.  Our officials are now watching video each week of the season as part of their weekly preparation.  If you see a play we need to watch and learn from, please send it in and our whole association will benefit from it.

**Coaches at College Games** – I crossed paths with another high school coach at a college game in LA.  I was reminded by how much our coaches invest in this game as he was their watching two former players.  I know coaches do this all of the time.  Kudos!

**Big Games Each Week** – We are now into league schedules and each week produces rivalries and “Big Games”.  We need to be aware of them as a part of our pregame.  Who are the teams?  What are their records?  What are their tendencies?  What are the teams’ standings?  This is a smaller part of the pregame but it should be included.  Assign this task to a crew member.

**From Andy Castagnola** - I just want to thank all the Youth and sub-varsity Referees who work with First Year Officials for extending our instruction program out onto the field on Saturdays.  You do a great job of giving time and instruction to the rookies.

**Space Between Teams** – This is just a reminder for coaches to allow the officials to create a space barrier between the teams when entering and exiting the field through the same gate.  We will hold the clock and not start the halftime until all of this is settled so we’re not hurrying.

**Intentional Grounding** – First I want to remind all coaches that there is no “outside the tackle box in high school rules.  QBs cannot dump the ball….ever.  that being said, if a QB is in the grasp we have no idea why a pass might have been thrown into an area not occupied by an eligible receiver so NO FOUL.  We must assume the action on the QB cause the errant throw.  Second, if there is an eligible receiver in the area, then NO FOUL.  The exception to this would be a QB who makes it so obvious that the receiver is directly in front of him and he throws the ball into the ground to save yardage from a sack.  All of this is judgment, so we have to continue to look at plays (we had a session just on this last week) and work for consistency.  Coaches must also respect the judgment of the referee.

**Free Kick and the Goal Line** – When the ball breaks the plane of the goal line, it is a touchback.  Even if the ball is being caught as it breaks the plane of the goal line, it is a touch back (because the force of the kick put it into the end zone.)  But if a player possesses a ball in the field of play (the kick has ended) and then carries it into the end zone, the ball remains live as the kick did not put it into the end zone.  When in doubt, the ball was not carried into the end zone and it is a touchback.

**Protective Sleeves** – These are the sleeves first made popular by basketball players.  We must assume they are for protection.  Allow them.